Trucial Oman MK4

162, 166, 619, 101, 622, 361, 438

/For an account of the settled tribes of Oman and the Trucial Coast in 1920--territory occupied, rulers, brief history, their settlements, means of livelihood, etc. see 30: Great Britain, Saudi Arabia MJ1, category 116, pp. 546-602./

1: Melamid R-4 (no date) 1953 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4
QATAR MK3

TABLE 1—STATES OF THE SOUTHEASTERN PERSIAN GULF REGION
(The population is the estimated settled population.)

STATE	POLITICAL STATUS	CAPITAL AND POPULATION	REPORTED BOUNDARIES	REMARKS
QATAR*	Trucial sheikhdom until 1868; British confirmation of independent British-protected status in 1913 and 1916.	Doha	East-west across the peninsula from Khor al Odeid; area given as 4500 square miles.	Resident British representative since 1950; no statistical information available except data on crude-oil exports; dispute with Bahrein on rights in the northwest end of peninsula.
ABU DHABI	Trucial sheikhdom since 1820.	Abu Dhabi, 4000 to 10,000	On the coast west at Khor el Odeid, east at Khor al Ghamdha; one day's camel journey inland; area given as 2500 square miles.	In area probably the largest of the present Trucial states; the town of Abu Dhabi is connected to the mainland by a causeway covered with water at high tide, and has a poor supply of drinking water; good relations with the Bedouins of the region are reported.
DIBAI	Trucial sheikhdom since 1820.	Dibai, 20,000	On the coast west at Khor al Ghamdha, east at Abu Hail; area given as 1500 square miles.	The town of Dibai is probably the largest of the region, containing the local market for pearls and the office of the Iocal representative of the petroleum concessionaire; seaplane base; the town is located on the most navigable creek of the area and is occasional port of call for steamers from overseas; recent visitors report friction between the sheikh and local Bedouins and with the descendants of the former ruling family (until last century) resident at Dairah, across the creek from Dibai.
SHARJAH	Trucial sheikhdom since 1820.	Sharjah, 3000 to 15,000	Enclaves sheikhdom of Ajman; stretches inland to Dhaid.	Aerodrome with fortified compound for passengers' accommodation; offshore passing grounds; residence of British representative for the Trucial Coast; formerly overlord of Ras al Khaima and other sheikhdoms, and thus most important political power in the region; the town of Sharjah is visited by steamers from India.
AJMAN	Trucial sheikhdom since 1820.	Ajman 3000	Sometimes reported entirely enclosed by territory of Sharjah; also reported as shoreline territory of Ras al Khaima; area given as 250 square miles.	Sometimes reported to be tributary to Sharjah; sheikh keeps a riding stable.
UMM AL QAIWAIN	Trucial sheikhdom since 1820.	Umm al Qaiwain, 3000	Including the oasis Falaj al Ali; area given as 250 square miles.	In the past more important than today; frequently at war during the nineteenth century; occupation before 1883 part of Sharjah, and again from 1918 to 1929; the town of Umm al Qaiwain is located on a small peninsula.
RAS AL KHAIMA	Trucial sheikhdom since 1919.	Ras al Khaima, 3000	On the coast west at Jazirat al Hamra, east at Sha'am; reported to extend inland but exclude the mountainous area.	In the past tributary to Sharjah; in 1952 the sheikh refused to give permission for the establishment of a flying-boat base; in contrast with other sheikhdoms, a large part of the revenue is derived from the sale of dates.

1: Molamid K-4 (no date) 1953 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

TABLE I—*Continued*

STATE	POLITICAL STATUS	CAPITAL AND POPULATION	REPORTED BOUNDARIES	REMARKS
KALBA	Trucial sheikhdom since 1937.	Kalba, 5000 to 5000	On the coast of the Gulf of 'Oman north at Dibba, south at Khor Kalba; includes territory on the west side of the mountains of 'Oman.	In the past tributary to Sharjah.
'OMAN	Independent British-protected sultanate.	Muscat, 500,000	Enclave on the peninsula of Musandam west at Sha'am, east at Dibba; main territory on Gulf of 'Oman east of Khor Kalba.	'Oman sovereignty over peninsula of Musandam established with British help.
OTHER TERRITORIES:				
FUJAIRAH	Sheikhdom without Trucial status.	....	Probably enclave in Kalba located primarily near the Gulf of 'Oman.	In the past probably tributary to Sharjah.
BURAIMI	Neutral area claimed by Saudi Arabia, 'Oman, and Abu Dhabi.	5000	Probably bounded by many Trucial sheikhdoms and 'Oman.	Inland oasis reported before 1625 and today under the influence of Abu Dhabi.
HAFIT	Reported joint property of Abu Dhabi and 'Oman.	....	....	Near Buraimi.
DHAID	Reported as neutral part of Sharjah, and part of Kalba.	....	....	On motor road from the Persian Gulf to Gulf of 'Oman.
LIWA	Political control nowhere described.	....	....	Southwest of Abu Dhabi; reported to be trading with Abu Dhabi.

*Parts of the region between the boundaries of Qatar and the town of Abu Dhabi may be territory of Saudi Arabia. South of the town of Abu Dhabi there may be territory of the Trucial sheikhdoms or of Saudi Arabia or of 'Oman or of Aden Protectorate.

As Sir Percy Cox[1]

writes: "The relative position of the Principalities . . . depends almost entirely on the personalities of the ruling Shaikhs for the time being. Unfortunately, owing to the chronic prevalence . . . of . . . feuds, they have for the last few generations been a short-lived class." Besides the territories of the sheikhs, there are neutral areas. In one of them, the Buraimi Oasis, near the border of 'Oman, a durbar (an official meeting of all the Trucial sheikhs with a British representative) took place in 1945;[8] this inconveniently located place was selected because sheikhs' wars prevented the choice of a better place near the coast. Another neutral area (although there seems to be a difference of opinion on its status) is the oasis of Dhaid,[9] on the motorcar route from Sharjah to the

[8] O'Shea, *op. cit.* [see footnote 3, above], p. 171. See below (p. 204) for other claims to Buraimi.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 156. See also Desmond Vesey-Fitzgerald: From Hims to Oman by Car, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 41, 1951, pp. 544-560, reference on p. 553.

[1] [For footnote, see p. 197 of text -- Analyst]

suddenly merge into green as one walked over the sands, and come upon a copse of tamarisk and camel thorn, with moss and grass and occasionally a type of dandelion, growing in their shade.

To obtain a glimpse of this infinite variety of the desert, one should fly over it at two thousand feet. From this height one has an ideal panorama in which are focused mountain peaks of changing colour, shallow seas of pale jade green, and sands that vary from golden yellow to blood red.

My own entry into Arabia was by air. After two days' flight from Poole, with night-stops at Cairo and Bahrein Island, our Short Sunderland flying-boat crossed the Persian Gulf through thundery cumulus clouds and flew three hundred miles direct to Dubai, a busy town ten miles south-west of Sharjah. The mountains suddenly gave way to a long, narrow creek, and we skimmed the low-walled town to make a smooth landing between the marker buoys. From the air the open-roofed houses looked as though they had been bombed, the shadows giving the sharp relief of inked-in squares. The gardens of the merchants were gay with feathery palms, and in the creek and harbour scores of dhows, with awnings of palm-matting, lazily skimmed the surface.

Our four-engined aircraft was speedily moored to the buoy—an operation requiring some dexterity on the part of the first officer, who has to hook the ring at the top of the buoy as the aircraft slowly taxies up to it; if he misses, the flying-boat has to make a second circuit or else taxi to another buoy. The passenger launch was already half-way across the creek, with the sun-bronzed coxswain at the wheel. He was a Scot who had spent two years in the desert and had never had a day's illness. The clean lines and trim condition of the launch were impressive, as were the Arab serangs, clad in blue jerseys and wearing piratical caps, who stood in the stern like guardsmen. The engines were reversed to enable the launch to glide slowly under the wing, and careful hands grasped the flying-boat's hull to prevent bumping. The door was opened and as soon as the traffic officer had clambered aboard with his papers and diplomatic mail, we were ushered aboard the launch. Happily, there were none of the usual port formalities, for at Dubai there are no immigration, customs or passport requirements for air travellers.

As we chugged away from our silver-painted craft towards the tiny stone pier, I felt that we had suddenly drifted into another world —a world of azure, cloudless skies, pellucid green water, and soft,

with the greatly-extended air services which had developed since those early days.

The radio officer came and reported that he had received the 'all clear' from the flying-boat. We locked up the rest-house, dismissed the serangs, and crowded into the two station wagons which were to take us the ten miles to the Fort. It was a tight squeeze, with bearers and clerks sitting on each others' knees in the back seat, but since transport is scarce in the desert, I found this was the customary way of travelling.

There was a track of sorts* beaten out by the wheels of countless vehicles, which wound its way around the sand dunes and the date palms. In hot weather the desert is as hard as a macadam road, and one can drive almost anywhere, but in the season of the rains flooding is frequent, and once you get stuck in a soft patch nothing less than a four-wheel drive truck with a crane will get you out. So we stuck to the road and did a fairly comfortable thirty miles an hour through the most monotonous country I have ever seen. Fortunately the rest of the desert is not like this. Between Sharjah and Dubai the landscape is as flat as a table, and the sand a dun, muddy grey, without a single bit of scrub or camel grass to relieve it.

There was little activity on the road. A flock of black goats scattered as we drove past, the young herdsman casting us a scared glance. A fat merchant on a donkey, his bare legs almost touching the ground, trotted by, a dignified expression on his face which contrasted comically with his primitive mode of travel. Away to the dunes on our left, a train of loaded camels trudged majestically towards a Bedouin encampment, their riders carrying long, silver-chased rifles. Ahead there gleamed in the sun what looked like a wide, shallow lake. Our driver made straight towards it; as we advanced so it receded, and eventually it evaporated into the air. I have often heard it said that these mirages are due to heat reflection, but an old Arab whom I knew said they were caused by the salt crystals and silicates in the sand, which reflected the sun like a mirror. Science may not accept his theory, but I have often picked up large flakes of salt from the desert which sparkled like fragments of glass.

We approached the village of Khan, a small dependancy of Sharjah, whose minarets and white-walled houses appeared to float in the air like a fairy city—again the effect of a mirage. Five more miles and we skirted a high range of sand dunes and soon glimpsed the radio masts and white, crenellated walls of our fortress home. A mile behind it the dun stone walls of the sheikh's palace

*Between Dubai and Sharjah, ca 10 miles a[illegible]t -- Analyst

and the tower-topped houses and mud huts of the town rose to view.

The fort gleamed dazzling white against a background of huts, tents and low stone quarters of the R.A.F. and Indian troops stationed at Sharjah. The massive iron doors in the south entrance, large enough to admit a fair-sized tank and painted silver with the legend 'British Overseas Airways' in letters of yellow-gold, were open. They had not been closed since the tribal war of 1940, and were rusted to the ground. One of my many minor tasks was to have them repaired and ready to shut at a moment's notice. Facing the entrance, and somewhat spoiling its imposing façade, were the shabby, coral-faced hutments of the R.A.F. Station Headquarters, with the U.S. Transport Command's meteorological building adjoining and, topping them, the square control tower shared by the two Allied forces. At the extreme end of this jumble of tattered offices was the U.S. latrine. It had been erected despite formidable opposition from the last Station Manager and, though in my opinion no worse an eyesore than the other domestic buildings, was hardly the type of edifice one would wish a V.I.P. to look at on leaving the imposing fort. But Americans are sanitary-minded, and we must bow to their idiosyncrasies.

Our convoy of cars swept into the courtyard and drove into the open garage. Before going to my quarters I met the Catering Officer, an excellent chef. Lambert had been in the desert for nearly two years, but dust, sand and blinding sun had not dimmed the delectable arts of the kitchen which he had learned at the Grand Hotel in Brighton or aboard Lady Yule's fantastically luxurious yacht. His job did not end with superintending the preparation of food; he was in charge of all food supplies, refriggeration plant, and the furnishing and maintenance of the quarters; he ruled the Persian bearers with a kindly but iron hand, and the fort garden was also his responsibility.

The garden, which was enclosed by a stone wall three feet high, and which one entered through an archway burgeoning with bougainvillea, must be one of the world's smallest. I do not think it could have measured more than fifteen feet by thirty feet, yet it was symmetrically laid out with cement paths and flower beds gay with pink and white *vinker*, a local type of stock. In the centre was a ship's cannon, dating from the George IV period, probably stolen by the Arabs from a pirated wreck. It had been presented to Station Manager Clive Adams by the Sheikh of Umm-al-Quain, or

to the majority of professing Christians. If an easy acceptance of poor and insanitary living conditions is one of the major faults of this race, as I believe it is, then such a shortcoming is easily counterbalanced by their innumerable virtues, which are seldom found in practice amongst Englishmen.

I have not had the opportunity to make a deep study of social problems in Arabia, but from my interpretation of what I have seen, I should not hesitate to lay the blame for the vices and backwardness of Arab life on the system of government which obtains in most regions. In principle it is comparable with the feudal system in Europe. Apart from the Bedouin country, where life is migratory and the tribes are tent-dwellers, the majority of Arabs are concentrated in the fertile valleys, where they can obtain water for their livestock and crops. In Oman, as in other parts of the continent, the coastal areas are ruled by paramount sheikhs, whose power is absolute and who are sometimes elected by their subjects, but who are more generally appointed by succession, the kingdom thus remaining in the hands of one family. Although many of these princely families are quite ancient, and have provided rulers for different sheikhdoms for centuries, it is not unusual to find one sheikh deposing another by force. Jealousy and a greed for more territory and power are frequently the root cause of tribal wars.

There is little that is democratic in the government of a sheikhdom. Through his judges and ministers, who are paid out of the royal purse, the sheikh administers justice. Often it is the justice of a tyrant, although some sheikhs are just and kindly and are regarded by their subjects more as 'fathers of the people' than as kings. All land belongs to the sheikh, who is theoretically custodian for his tribe, and he exacts revenues from merchants, shopkeepers, fishermen, pearling-fleet owners and merchants, camel breeders and farmers, in the form of a commission on all business, in addition to heavy taxes on the inhabitants of the towns and villages. There are, too, taxes on land and property, on fishing and pearling rights, and profits are even obtained from the sale (illegal and contrary to the treaties with the British Government, but still indulged in) of slave labour.

Apart from the pearling industry, one of the richest sources of income in Arabia is from the date plantations, and these, if not actually owned by the sheikhs, at least provide him with a handsome additional income. In recent years the Arab rulers have been considerably enriched by large sums paid for concessions by the oil

000 The cars were running fairly well, but the glare from the sun was very trying to the eyes, in spite of tinted glasses. The roofs of the cars became so hot that the paint on the surface bubbled, and inside it was suffocating. We made a halt after about thirty miles' hard driving, had a smoke, and a drink from our tea flasks. To the north of us there shimmered what appeared to be a vast lake. I started to walk towards it and it gradually receded, turning out to be, as I had suspected, a perfect mirage, with waves and even a thin line of breakers on the shore. When I reached the spot where the 'lake' had been, I noticed, on looking down at the ground, that it sparkled as if covered with minute crystals. The surface was whiter than that of the surrounding desert, and I found that it consisted of a thin layer or crust of salt, intermingled with silica. A slice about six inches in diameter, and an eighth of an inch thick, was easily levered off and inspected by the company. I had literally succeeded in taking a piece of mirage in my hands. In case the scientifically-minded should quibble over this theory, I hasten to add that, although these saline-silica crystals undoubtedly caused this particular mirage, I should hesitate to ascribe all mirages as being due to the same cause. Others may possibly be due to high-frequency radiation of solar light waves striking the earth and being reflected back, and viewed from a favourable angle by the spectator.

133 The sand-plain[1] which we were now traversing, which was composed of sun-baked mud, showed signs of having been flooded at high-tide; it soon gave way to soft sandhills, and we rocked and swayed along for several miles until at last we reached the shore. Fortunately the tide was far out and, by creeping under the low cliffs, we contrived to keep our wheels out of the soft mud. A sandbank rose out of the cobalt sea until it formed a gleaming, white spit of land, forming a narrow creek, on the far side of which [361] stood out mistily the little town of Umm-al-Quain. The circular watch-towers, plaster houses and white-walled palace of the sheikh looked fairy-like in the morning sunlight. A white-sailed dhow swept gracefully down the creek and the fronds of the date palms swayed in the light breeze.

137 Before us the road swept suddenly into a sharp gradient and we entered the long, green valley of Hadaithah. Here, in startling contrast to the arid desert we had left behind us, the vegetation was lush and plentiful. Spring had come early to the valley and even the insipid neam trees (a species of acacia) had a verdant, pristine

1 [Between Sharjah and Ras-al-Khaimah--Analyst]

mile of shallow water. There was a haze over the land, a sure sign of hot weather ahead, and the straggling town of Ras-al-Khaimah had the blurred appearance of a Whistler pastel. The palace, cornered by battlemented towers with an architectural resemblance to a crusader's castle, was built of pink rock, the rose-red hue of Petra. In the sunlight it had the beauty of a coral shell, hemmed in by the cube-shaped houses of the merchants, walled gardens of date palms and pomegranates, and the gleaming gold dome of the mosque.

We disembarked alongside a little wooden pier and began to trail up the steep, pebbled shore towards the palace. A guard of Beni Yas tribesmen approached with rifles at the ready, until the Khan Sahib gave them a sign and spoke to them in the local dialect. Recognizing him, they bowed respectfully and, after scrutinizing us with a great show of curiosity, ushered us through the tall gateway into the palace courtyard. It was open to the sun, with two tall palm trees growing as high as the verandas, on which lolled Arab retainers in the act of performing their morning toilet. Camels, tied to stakes in the ground, reared up on their knees as we entered and began to snarl in their unpleasant fashion.

Standing in an ornately-decorated doorway was a tall, white-bearded figure, clad in long white robes, with a gold sword belted to his waist. It was Sheikh Sultan bin Salim, ruler of Ras-al-Khaimah. He slowly descended the steps to the courtyard and embraced the Khan Sahib in the Arab style, and then shook hands with each of us in turn. In a few minutes we were joined by the members of the Court, and the procession wended its way into the cool, dim reception chamber at the far end of the palace. The building was in a much better state of repair than the palace at Sharjah, and the floor of the chamber was of black and white marble squares, highly polished by sandals. The chairs, of rosewood inlaid with mother o' pearl, were emblazoned with the sheikh's coat of arms, whilst priceless Shiraz rugs, of wine red and Prussian blue pattern, were scattered on the floor.

Silk cushions were provided for us to sit upon, and after the usual introductory conversation, a slave brought in a pot of fragrant coffee. A large brass tray was placed by our side; this contained numerous sweetmeats, including Turkish delight, and little bowls of pomegranates, oranges and almonds. The sheikh questioned us about our journey, and seemed highly amused when we told him of the breakdown of the cars. He soon started off on a long discourse about the advantages of having an airfield at Ras-al-Khaimah,

we all were sensible that behind the smiling mask lay a mind as keen and poised as the blade of his ceremonial sword.

When we left the palace, the sun was blazing from a cloudless sky and the creek shone like a mirror. We returned to the Khan Sahib's house to pack some refreshments, and then mounted the six camels which he had procured for us and began the eight-mile ride to his summer residence at the foot of the mountains. Although a comparatively short distance, the journey was a tiring one. Apart from a few scattered palm trees, there was no shade, and the sun, being in the meridian, was at its fiercest and beat down upon us mercilessly. The humidity was extremely trying, also: Frew thought it must have been about 80°. The perspiration streamed off our faces and seeped through our shirts. Our camels, also affected by the heat, lumbered along in leisurely fashion, which was not so uncomfortable as when they cantered. We passed several large date plantations, as shady and inviting as an English wood, and noisy with the cries of jays and parakeets. Brilliant-hued butterflies darted among the palm fronds, some of them measuring six inches across the wings.

Crossing a dried-up water course, or *wadhi*, we reached the foot of the hills. Of buff and pink sandstone, they sloped gradually for 300 feet, and were easily climbable for that distance. At that point they gave way to sheer cliffs of black and brown igneous rock, formidable with giant buttresses and massive boulders. Occasionally we glimpsed passes and crevices along the slopes which were honeycombed with caves. In these, the Khan Sahib informed us, the Shi'hou tribes lived. About 2,000 feet up, there were plateaux in the mountains, with small valleys where the tribesmen cultivated corn and sugar canes. We saw nothing of the Shi'hou, however, and after an hour's ride entered a low-lying valley through an avenue of tall neam trees.

There were about twenty houses on this summer estate. Each was a two-storied coral and plaster dwelling, with an open veranda running round the top floor. A low mud wall and a wicket gate divided the properties, each of which had its guard of sleepy-looking Arabs armed with rifles. We dismounted in front of the gateway, leaving our camels in charge of the guard. In contrast to the surrounding desert, the garden was like an illustration from the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*. White and crimson roses flourished in pots on either side of the path, whilst masses of red and purple bougainvillea trailed over the veranda. There was even a small

[Dear Ras-al-Khaimah -- Analyst]

she pleaded that no man had been near her that night. On being questioned, she admitted that she had stopped to gather some *fagar* on the way home, darkness had fallen and she had lost her way. She had spent the night most respectably, sleeping under a neam tree. (To understand this incident, it should be explained that the *fagar* is a kind of edible fungus, much liked by the Arabs, and that in shape it curiously resembles the phallus.)

The trackers employed by the Sheikh of Sharjah were reputed to be the cleverest in Arabia. That afternoon I had gone for a walk to the Sheikh's Wells, a delightful spot about two miles from the fort, whence we obtained our water supply. The area is covered with flower and vegetable gardens, and guarded by one of the round stone watch-towers which one finds on the outskirts of most Arab towns. The Sheikh and his Ministers arrived in a smart Hudson automobile, followed by the Khan Bahadur, Abdur bin Razzak, in his sedan. They were met by two trackers on camels, and proceeded to hold a conference.

Fifteen minutes later the trackers set off for the hospital, picked up the tracks of the raiders, and were soon galloping off in the desert at a smart pace in the direction of Baraimi. This is a small market town in the middle of a trackless desert. The territory is not claimed by any sheikh, although several have tried to possess it. For hundreds of years it has remained neutral ground, and its famous date plantations represent the only example of co-operation among the tribes, for each has a share in the crop. Baraimi is not only a centre for the slave trade, but is a refuge for criminals.

We heard later that the raiders had been traced to Dhaid, but that the trackers had been unable to arrest them. They were in hiding with about a hundred other brigands, and there are limits to the courage of a tracker. Compensation for the thefts was paid to the R.A.F. authorities, and it was a rather curious fact that, several months later, sheets and blankets, bearing the R.A.F. tabs, were found in local houses.

Desert raiders are usually the 'bad boys' of their tribe, and their conduct does not always reflect the character of the tribe as a whole. Some tribes pride themselves on their honesty and deal very sternly with offenders. If a tribesman of the Beni Qitab is caught in the act of stealing or raiding, the Sheikh Mahomed, the patriarch who rules this tribe, will make himself personally responsible for the thief's apprehension and punishment. This may take the form of amputating the right arm, branding, or the more barbarous punish-

721 to one another by marriage, is extremely unlikely. Internecine
● [361] war is likely only between the nomadic tribes who roam the desert and avoid the towns; they live in goats' hair tents, congregating around the wells and oases in the hot season. The largest and most
[622] powerful of these tribes in Oman is that of the Beni Qitab, whose Sheikh is the Mohamed Ali, a fine, tall, white-bearded warrior with a hawk-like nose and piercing eyes. As he is at present on friendly terms with the Khan Bahadur, war against the town sheikhs is unlikely.

CHAPTER VI

THE last war of any importance, as I have stated, was that between Sharjah and Dubai in 1940. The cause of the war was a long-standing feud between the tribes of Bani Yas (Dubai) and Qasimi (Sharjah). There was also a dispute over territorial limits claimed by the sheikhs. The sheikhdom of Dubai is composed of two distinct districts; Dubai town proper, on the west of the creek, and Dera, on the north side. The largest and better-built houses, mostly inhabited by Indian and Persian merchants, as well as the more important shops of the pearl brokers, carpet sellers and gold-smiths, are situated in Dubai town. Here one finds cool, clean narrow streets with high walls, often overhung with Persian rugs to keep off the sun, and pleasant open shops where one may buy anything from a five hundred years' old Bokhara rug or a brass-bound Quaiti chest, to an American wrist-watch or a roll of bread. In the poorer section of Dera, where the fishermen and coolies live, there is a native bazaar and several long streets of shops, but these are dirty, dark and infested with flies. There one may buy items of gaudy Arab clothing, tobacco leaves, and dried food, including fish, spices, nuts, ghee butter, henna bark and rice. Some alley-ways are devoted entirely to silversmiths and tinsmiths; the latter are clever craftsmen and can make almost any domestic utensil out of an empty petrol can.

For several hundred years Dubai (which includes, besides the town, several villages and a tract of desert of about fifty square miles), has been ruled by the Al Bu Falaah branch of the Bani Yas clan, who are related to another Al Bu Falaah family, the sheikhs of Abu Dhabi (the 'Place of Gazelles'). Rivalry between the sheikhs of Dubai and their cousins in Dera, on the other side of the creek, may be traced back as far as 1850, when the Ak Bu Mahair family, their cousins, intrigued for ownership of the region. The Mahair were notorious pirates. A British gunboat had occasion to land a ship's crew at Dera to investigate an attack on a merchant ship in Dubai waters. Soon after the sailors from the gunboat had landed they were waylaid in a dark side street and murdered; as a

at Sharjah creek, and was formally entertained by the sheikh once a month, I seldom had the opportunity of visiting the town itself. Smaller and less scattered than Dubai, Sharjah is typically Arabian, and the plain, square houses of the merchants, built of whitewashed juss, bear a strange resemblance to the 'functional' houses publicized so much in the architectural press. They are based on a simple plan; in the centre is the courtyard, with the living quarters on one side, and the sleeping apartments on the other. They are seldom higher than two storeys, but an appearance of height is given to them by the tall, square wind-towers, or Persian ventilators, which circulate cool draughts of air throughout the house during even the hottest days.

A long covered corridor usually runs at the back of the house, linking the living and sleeping quarters, and behind this are the kitchen and lavatories. The two wings are also joined at the front of the house by a full-length veranda, where the owner and his family sit in the evenings, drinking their sherbet or coffee. A rug or coco-nut matting, a few plain teak chairs, or perhaps a small tiled table, complete the furnishing of the average living room; the bedrooms are even more sparsely furnished, with little more than the canvas charpoy, or Indian bed, although many Arabs prefer to sleep on a rug on the floor.

It was during one of my occasional visits to Sharjah that I met Hassan bin Ahmidfa, the young son of a pearl merchant; his house is on the edge of the creek and is one of the largest and most elaborate in Sharjah, and furnished in the Turkish style. The huge doors leading to the courtyard are of unvarnished sandalwood, exquisitely carved with fabulous beasts and the conventional floral designs one sees on Kermani rugs. Hassan, who speaks flawless English, received part of his education at Bombay University, where he studied literature and economics, an unusual combination. He is very interested in Western culture and politics and extremely well-informed on most subjects.

Our conversations ranged from a discussion on Shaw to Schopenhauer and Kant, both of whose philosophies he found untrue and pessimistic; he could not agree that what the former called 'the world of ideas' had no objective existence apart from our sensory-perceptions of it, and argued that man could not attain happiness without realism. For an Oriental, Hassan was strangely materialistic, although it must not be assumed that the average Arab is a mystic; he is probably less so than the average German.

CHAPTER X

FROM the roof of the Fort one has a fine view of the surrounding desert. Due south-west the muddy creek curves like a snake past the little town of Khan, a dependency of Sharjah. Only the tops of the houses and the slender minaret are visible, since Khan is hidden by sand-dunes and an enchanting copse of date palms. The palm trees thicken as one looks further south, marking the beginning of the flourishing plantations which screen the town of Dubai, ten miles distant. Khan consists of about a hundred houses, and is ruled by a headman; the inhabitants are fishermen, pearl divers and sponge collectors. There is a very small boat-building industry, whilst some charming brass-bound chests are made there by native craftsmen; these chests are made of teak wood and are usually lacquered, after the Kuwait fashion. The sponge industry is unimportant and is confined to a few families. Men and women wade into the creek at low tide to collect the sponges, which are coarse and of an extremely poor grade. They cannot be exported and are used by the local Arabs.

Sharjah, a large rambling town of about 10,000 inhabitants, lies one mile north-west of the Fort, from which one has a fine view of the half-ruined fort, from one of the towers of which flies the sheikh's personal flag—a scarlet square with a wide white border. This fort, or 'palace', which lies at the back of the town, was built for strategic reasons with its gateway facing the open desert. The Khan Bahadur told me that it is about four hundred years old; the towers and the gateway were erected by the Portuguese, who established military and trading outposts on the Persian Gulf coast in the seventeenth century. Old ships' cannons, taken from the wrecks of British and French merchantmen, ornament the front of the fort; some bear the Admiralty anchor or the Royal insignia, G.R. III, and though rusty and time-worn, are still fired by the sheikh during tribal wars or on festive occasions.

The Persian Gulf was the haunt of pirates until almost the end of the nineteenth century, and the waters around Sharjah and Dubai were infested with these cruel and bloodthirsty sea-brigands,

2: O'Shea G-3 (1944-1945) 1947 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

most of whom belonged to the Quasimi clan, of which the Sheikh of Sharjah is the titular head. I have had many a joke with Sheikh Sultan and his nobles over stories of the old piratical days, and they were greatly amused to learn that my great-great-grandfather, who entered the Royal Navy as a midshipman in 1789, had taken part in a sortie against Sharjah in 1830, when his frigate shelled the town as a reprisal against a murderous attack on a British merchantman. I shall refer later to the history of piracy in Oman which, on account of the predatory raids on shipping, gained the title of 'the Pirate Coast' in the last century.

The town of Sharjah is built on the shores of the creek, the contour of which it follows in crescent shape until the open sea is reached; at low tide a spit of sand or 'bar', separates the creek from the Gulf. Only at low tide is it possible to cross the creek on foot and make the journey to Khan; on the far side of this sand-bridge or 'bar' there is a primitive wooden lighthouse, built by the sheikh for the guidance of the pearling boats, and a small colony of fishermen's huts. The residences of the merchants, which are all two-storeyed buildings with wide verandas and imposing gateways, are built facing the sea, a distinct advantage in the hot weather. When a breeze is blowing, they are cooler inside in the summer months than an air-conditioned room at the Fort, and much more pleasant.

The town is about half a mile in length, and an eighth of a mile wide, with narrow, crooked streets running through the centre, and quaint, dark alleyways formed by the back walls of the houses. I could never get accustomed to the twists and curves of these streets, some of which were wide enough for only two people to pass abreast, although the Arabs used to ride donkeys and camels through them. Little doorways would suddenly open in the walls, whilst from a window high up would descend a cascade of refuse or dirty water. Some of these doorways are extremely beautiful; shaped like the double doors of an old English church, they are set in a frame of decorated stone, and the unvarnished teak is studded with pointed brass knobs. Sometimes they are inset with a secondary door, large enough to admit one person.

One afternoon I accompanied the Station Engineer, Sparkes, to Sharjah on a shopping expedition; we took a mechanic, Mahmud, with us to act as interpreter. Sparkes wanted to haggle with one of the merchants, and rather impolitely declined to rely on my Arabic. He had recently purchased an old Arab seal, a large, oval

2: O'Shea G-3 (1944-1945) 1947 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

chalcedony stone with a faded inscription, and had taken it to the silversmith to have it made into a ring; the purpose of his visit was to collect and pay for it, not always a simple matter in Arabia, where the merchant normally demands twice the legitimate price and expects to be beaten down.

Mahmud, who is a Baluchi and lives with his family in the poorer part of the town, took us through the less salubrious quarter. Sharjah has no city wall proper, but its place is taken by a ring of filthy hovels, the palm-thatched barousti huts of the coolies, slaves and servants. The stench from these slums is unbearable in hot weather, for each hut dweller uses his front door as a cesspool and a refuse dump, and the place is infested with flies and insects; native children crawl about in the sand, and mangy pai dogs snarl at one's approach. These miserable hovels afford protection against neither sun nor rain, and it is remarkable that their poverty-stricken inhabitants are not afflicted with disease. The quarter is a disgrace to Sharjah town and, although the Political Officer has remonstrated with the sheikh about it, he refuses to have the place rebuilt.

It was a pleasant relief to pass into the cool, dim alleys leading to the town; many of them are roofed with palm-thatch and are comparatively clean. The walls are honeycombed with doorways, leading to the houses of the tradesmen and metalsmiths. After a walk of fifteen minutes through the maze of dark, winding streets, during the progress of which we were conscious of hundreds of dark eyes staring curiously at us, we reached the sugar market. This is a large square in the centre of the town; it is roofed-in with huge strips of palm-matting, supported by whitewashed wooden pillars, making it very dim inside.

Tethered to the pillars were six camels, snarling and grumbling; occasionally they tried to rise, but their forefeet were tied together and they would hobble for a few yards and quickly fall back on their knees. They had brought bags of sugar from a boat in the harbour, and their owners were arguing over prices with the brokers. The market, which is about six hundred feet square, contains warehouses, brokers' offices and shops on each side. We should have liked to take a photograph of it, but as Sparkes had no time-exposure on his camera he decided not to risk wasting his film.

The colour and variety of dress one sees in a native bazaar is remarkable. The women are the least attractive, their trousers, wraps and veils being of an unrelieved black; it is their menfolk

2: O'Shea G-3 (1944-1945) 1947 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

really a most lovable ruffian, his Christ-like face contrasting oddly with the fanatical fire in his eyes. Hussein, his minister, despite his dirty clothes and unkempt beard, also amused me very much; he carried a huge sword, whilst his belt was always bulging with weapons—knives, Muscat daggers, and a Mauser pistol. He was the living embodiment of Captain Teach, the eighteenth century pirate.

Sheikh Raschid was always pestering me to visit his 'palace' at Ajman and accompany him on a gazelle hunt so, partly in order to placate him and partly because I liked the rascal, I eventually agreed to accept his invitation. I chose a week-end in May when, owing to bad weather at Barhain and Karachi, aircraft had been held up for a few days. Ellis, the Station Engineer, who had performed several tasks for the sheikh, was also invited, and we made arrangements to set off in one of the cars after lunch. A few minutes before we were due to leave the Fort three camels put in an appearance. The servant who brought them explained that Sheikh Raschid bin Hamid considered that they would be more comfortable for the journey.

As a rule I dislike riding camels; I consider they are one of the most uncomfortable modes of transport ever discovered. In this case, however, I was glad of them. The route to Ajman lies through tracks of deep, soft sand, in which the tyres of vehicles invariably get stuck. To extricate them is a long and difficult task, frequently requiring the aid of another vehicle. Soft sand is far worse than mud, and even if the wheels do not sink in it, they slip and slither all over the place, so that it is a matter of extreme luck if you do not hit a palm tree or a rock. Wheel chains are of little help, as they seem to plunge the car deeper into the sand. The only way to negotiate soft sand successfully is to drive at great speed and take a zig-zag course.

Ajman lay to the north of Sharjah, beyond the little fishing village of Hera; the distance was not more than five miles but the camels were slow and it took us an hour to reach the outskirts of the town. There are two Ajmans on the map—the town proper and the district surrounding it, which has an area of about ten square miles. Most of it is bare desert, full of *wadhis* and sandhills, but near the sea-shore there are flourishing date plantations, whereas Sharjah does not boast a single one.

The town is much pleasanter than Sharjah. The track leading to it is indescribably bad, being full of pot-holes, old wells, rocks

and dunes of soft sand, but the approach is through a cool grove of palm trees, with gardens on either side. The houses and streets are neat and clean, the town being planned in four sections in the form of a cross. Each section is surrounded by gardens and palm plantations, with a high fence of palm leaf matting to shield it from the dust and wind. Raschid may be a wily rascal but he understands the basic principles of town planning and his town is an example of what can be done in the desert.

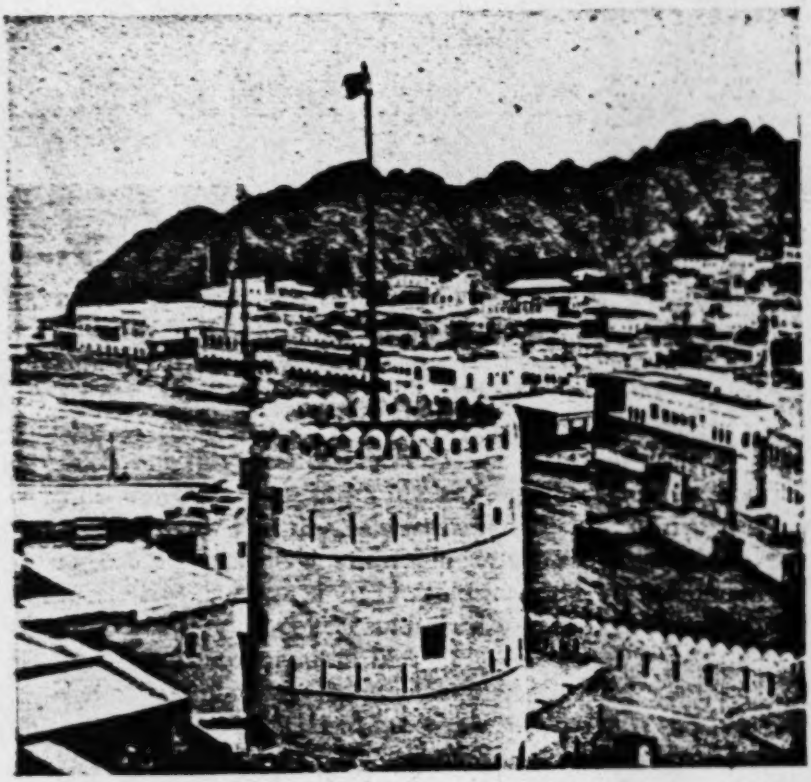
The desert track ended just outside the town, giving way to a wide road with a hard surface, suitable for any type of car. Green palm trees waved on either side of the road and the air was full of the song of birds. The bazaar lay to our left, on the seaward side, but we skirted this and rode straight ahead towards the palace. This is a large, imposing building, with great buttresses and cliffs of honey-brown sandstone rising straight out of the sand. Architecturally, it is one of the finest forts in Oman, with ramparts and crenellated towers resembling those of the crusaders' castles at Acre. The two large towers, facing south, and the bastions are of seventeenth century Portuguese design, and the pitted, battered walls are evidence of the turbulent history of this desert outpost, for the people of Ajman were once the most warlike of all the tribes.

We dismounted outside the main gateway, where Raschid bin Hamid, Hussein and other members of the court were waiting to greet us. This gateway, cut in a side wall, is small and rather insignificant, but no doubt it was built thus for strategic reasons. There is a larger gate on the west side, heavily barred and studded with brass nails, set in a thirty-foot wall, but this is never used. To the left of this gate the wall is overhung with a large veranda, with grilled and fretted windows; behind this lie the women's quarters and the harem.

There are some remarkably fine cannon outside the fort, varying from small bronze culverts of Portuguese origin, to twelve-pounders of Crimean vintage, still suspended on their original wooden wheels. The muzzles of small brass cannons bristle from the loopholes in the walls of the fort, but their use is purely decorative. An air of decay pervades the huge building and the sandy plaster is falling from the walls, but even in dilapidation it is extremely picturesque.

Sheikh Raschid shook hands and then embraced us in the Arab fashion, brushing our cheeks with his bearded lips, which smelt of perfume and tobacco.

361



The harbour at Ras-al-Khaimah, a stronghold of pirates and slave-traders in the 19th century. The Sheikh's palace is in the foreground

following p 140(c)

sailed it across the Gulf single-handed, landed at Jask at night and, eluding the Persian guards, crept into the offices. He made several trips back and forth in this manner, carrying armfuls of files, books, papers and records. Finally he set fire to the huts and ran down to the shore under fire from the sentries' rifles. Abdul returned in safety to Sharjah and presented the Station Manager with about half a ton of 'bumph' for which he had risked his life. If there were such a thing as a Civil Servant's Medal I feel sure old Abdul is entitled to it.

I decided to spend the following week as a convalescent, and handed over my principal duties to McGilvray, the red-headed South African Traffic Officer. One afternoon, when a Sunderland flying-boat was due to make a landing at Dubai, I decided to accompany the party. It was a hot and uncomfortable drive, but it was cool inside the rest-house and Haider soon made us iced tea with lemon, and produced some delicious sausage-rolls. We were just building a small control tower on the roof, and it was pleasant to climb to the top and sit in a deck chair; there was invariably a fresh sea breeze on the roof, and one had a magnificent view of the distant mountains at Ras-al-Khaimah, seventy miles away and of the blue-green creek and the town of Dubai beyond.

Whilst the flying-boat discharged its passengers I wandered along the creek shore and picked up some fine specimens of shells, including mother-o'-pearl, and pieces of branch-like coral. This coral is pure white and delicately perforated, resembling Honiton lace; sometimes pink mollusc shells are found adhering to it, and these are used by the Arabs as pin trays. The shore is littered with rocks, garbage, bones and refuse from the boats, and occasionally one comes across the carcase of a donkey. Hundreds of crabs dart into their mud-holes as one approaches, and the rocks swarm with tiny lizards of a peculiar grey colour. It is surprising to find flowers growing amongst the decayed sea-wrack, but I have dug up several sea poppies and desert lilies—a yellow-flowered plant resembling a hyacinth—which were successfully transplanted in the Fort garden.

I watched the flying-boat take off on its long journey to Karachi, and joined the coxswain and the others at the end of the little jetty. Jock asked me if I would like a trip down the creek to Dubai in the launch, so we crowded into the small vessel and began to chug down-stream at a pleasant twelve knots. Dubai is a much more attractive town than Sharjah, and about twice as large; palm and

361 coco-nut trees grow down to the shore on either side of the creek, on the southern side of which is a palm-mat 'summer palace' belonging to the Sheikh of Ras-al-Khaimah, now used to house a discarded wife. The town is divided by the creek into two sections—Dubai proper, where the merchants and wealthier classes live, and Dera, the fishermen's quarter. We made for the latter and moored alongside a primitive wooden jetty beside which large pearling dhows were undergoing a careen.

342 The streets of Dera are filthy in the extreme, the inhabitants living in hovels roofed with palm-matting supported by wooden joists. The only presentable house was the coral and mortar residence of Ali, the Anglo-Persian Company's agent in Dubai; we stopped here for a few minutes and had a cup of tea made with
438 condensed milk. The Arabs, whose chief occupation is pearl
164 diving, fishing, shipbuilding and wool-weaving, were ragged and unkempt; many had sores on their legs and arms, and appeared to be suffering from eye infections. Many of the children were
364 badly pock-marked. The stench of refuse, stale fish, camel dung and rotting food was unbearable, and attracted clouds of flies.

144 One noticed a variety of racial types. The Omani Arabs predominated, but one saw also fair-skinned Persians, Bedouins, Sunussi, and negroid types who were obviously ex-slaves. Many of the Arabs, thin-bearded men with hawk-like noses, looked more
443 villainous than any I have seen. We strolled through the bazaar, but the shops were small and untidy and displayed goods of inferior quality. In several of the shops I noticed ancient iron safes, gaudily painted, which were of English manufacture and had obviously
159 been taken from merchantmen by the pirates. There is little doubt that most of the inhabitants of Dera, a vicious, sullen crowd, would gladly have returned to piracy had they been given half a chance.
142 In contrast to their cruel, sardonic faces around us, I was struck by the beauty of some of the children who swarmed at our side, feeling our clothes and touching our hands. A little girl of nine or ten attracted my attention; her perfectly formed features, luminous brown eyes and Grecian lips made me sigh for a pencil and sketchbook. The little boys were delightful creatures too, with laughing eyes and white, even teeth.

363 The streets were extremely dark, with high walls on one side and palm-matting completely covering them like a roof, whilst
443 the 'road' was a quagmire of mud and camel dung. Six shops out of every ten exhibited panniers of dried fruits and cereals, figs,

2: O'Shea G-3 (1944-1945) 1947 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

the horizon. It took about eight minutes to cross the creek, which is half a mile wide at this point, but the boats are heavy and clumsily made and the oars consist of rectangular boards nailed to a large pole. The boat was run on to the muddy, steep shore and we jumped out, picking our way amongst garbage and squatting Arabs.

The houses in Dubai Town, at the western and south side of the creek, are larger and more imposing than those in Dera; many of them have square towers and Persian ventilators, with verandas of Moorish design which lean dangerously away from the walls in cantilever fashion. The town is built upon the sides of a sloping hill, with a sandstone foundation, and the houses are curiously stepped or terraced; one walks along a road to find it is the roof of a house and, peering over the edge, sees another street below. The top of the hill is dominated by the sheikh's palace—a sandstone shell, no longer occupied, although the ruler's flag flies from the main tower. The Sheikh of Dubai lives in a walled house on the far side of the creek, overlooking the harbour and the sea.

The houses in the residential section of Dubai are large and clean, with high white walls and magnificent doorways of Moorish design. Some of the richer merchants' dwellings have small streets within their walls, with twisting alleys, steep flights of stone stairs and dark, cool rooms leading from the covered courtyards. One has the strange feeling in Dubai of being indoors all the time; this is because all the streets are roofed with palm-matting and one seldom sees the sky. It was rather like a visit to an Arab village at the British Exhibition in Wembley, except that this was the real thing, with all the aromas and colours of reality. Yet Dubai is remarkably clean for an Arab town, and some of the open booths and shops have first-class wares for sale. I have bought leather travelling bags here—made by native craftsmen—which were as handsome and well-made as anything at Fortnum & Mason's, and the Persian shops have stocks of modern and antique carpets which would please the most fastidious collector or decorator.

In one of the smaller houses on the highest terrace we found Mr. Jam Shan, the pearl merchant, who invited us into his dark and tiny sitting-room office. Both he and his sons wore shirts and trousers, smoked English cigarettes, and conversed in quite good Cockney, as they had spent many years in London. With the radio blaring an Indian song they sat bare-legged on the floor and resumed their work of sorting and counting the heap of pearls

481 133 rose-pink downs and grass-covered depressions covered with the charming *zahr* plant. The going was difficult and no vehicle other than a jeep could have made it; in addition to the soft sand, there were sudden outcrops of exposed rock at the base of the sand-ridges, termed by the Arabs *shuqqa*, and on several occasions we were nearly hurled out of our seats by these obstructions.

361 609 After five hours of hard driving we reached the fringe of the large oasis of Baraimi, and left our car by a clump of palm trees while our guide went forward to spy out the lie of the land. He returned after an interval of fifteen minutes to report that he had [561] identified several notorious slave dealers of the Beni Quitab tribe, but could find no signs of a market or slaves. He advised us that the inhabitants were liable to be hostile, in spite of Sir Geoffrey's recent visit, and suggested that we should return as speedily as possible.

Schultz and I had no mind to go back without seeing something of the celebrated 'town', which is in reality a collection of mud huts and tents built around the wells, although there is a small fortified building and we saw one or two shops in the open bazaar; we therefore decided to ignore Abdul's fears. No sooner had we entered the oasis than we were surrounded by a curious crowd, all *Badus*, who insisted on following us to the bazaar.

[443] The bazaar was a temporary structure opened by migrant dealers for the sale of cheap cloths and foodstuffs, and there was little of interest for us to see. We looked around for the 'dungeon' in which slaves were reputed to be detained pending their sale, but beyond the small fort and one or two other coral buildings, could see nothing which resembled a prison. Among the crowd, however, we did notice several negroes whose legs bore the marks of iron chains and the healed scars of a lash, but they were quickly hurried out of sight at our approach and we were not allowed to 609 question them. When we attempted to enter the door of the fort the crowd's attitude became threatening and for a moment I thought they would attack us.

At length the head Bedouin came forward and asked us what we wanted in Baraimi. We replied that we were friends of Sheikh Mohammed-bin Ali and had come to take photographs of the oasis. This appeared to satisfy him, but it was significant that we were not invited into any of the tents or asked to partake of coffee. Plainly, our presence was not desired, and when the headman coldly enquired whether it would not be advisable if we returned

000 Instead of venturing a thousand miles into the Great South Desert, we were now restricted to three hundred at the most, for I was obliged to limit the outward journey to seven days; the trip from Sharjah, our starting point, to Baraimi and Nimairiyah, we proposed to make by car, and this would shorten the journey by a hundred miles, leaving us a maximum of two hundred to cover in the seven days at my disposal. On April 10th, 1945, we made our final arrangements, packed our tents and baggage, and set out for Baraimi on the following day. Accompanying Schultz and I in the truck were Suliman Beg, Khofan bin Salim and Muhammed bin Hadi, our Askharis; the guides, trackers and other members of Sheikh Raschid's party had left with the camels two days previously and were to meet us at Nimairiyah.

487 The journey to Baraimi,* which I had previously visited, was without incident and after a brief rest in the oasis for refreshment, we continued along the rough caravan route until the village of [361] Bahairan, south of Wadhi Talaif, was reached just before sunset. There were several good wells in the district, so we were able to replenish our water-bottles. The town appeared to be deserted, except for an encampment of Bedouins, who did not, however, approach us; we decided to push on a little further and spend the night in the desert. Five miles ahead we found a small depression covered with *neam* trees and camel thorn, and here we pitched our tents; Suliman Beg cooked a meal of rice, bully beef and chipatties over a wood fire, proving his mastery of the culinary arts to be no mere boast, and after coffee and a smoke we turned in.

At dawn we once again set out after a quick breakfast and followed what we thought was the caravan route; after a few miles the track disappeared in a shallow *wadhi* full of boulders and shrubs and, on taking our bearings, we found we were several miles off our course. After a delay of two hours we found the route once more and reached Nimairiyah shortly after ten o'clock. The caravan was waiting by one of the wells, and Hamid bin Rahman, the Murra guide, greeted us with enthusiasm. We had promised him a present of a hundred rupees, in addition to his pay, if he could lead us to the lost city, and he was so eager to claim his reward that I am sure its ruined towers and ramparts were already mirrored in his mind.

487 During the process of transferring our equipment from the car
361 to the baggage camels, we had our lunch and took some photographs of Nimairiyah, a typical Arab settlement built around a

*[From Sharjah -- Analyst]

2: O'Shea G-3 (1944-1945) 1947 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

small oasis with wells and a date garden. We were presently joined by a crowd of Bedouins who peered at us in wonder, and when Hamid informed them that we were proceeding into the Rub-al-Khali they began to laugh. An aged *Badu*, who inspected our car with great interest, threw up his hands and shouted: 'Inshillah, but they must be mad!'

Mad or not, we were determined to proceed with our journey without delay and, as soon as our Arabs has said their midday prayers—with a special invocation for the protection of Allah during our entry into the unknown—we mounted our camels and set forth. Musa, the driver who was to take the car back to Sharjah, gave us a cheerful send-off, betraying relief that he was not included in the party, and leaving the caravan route on our right we cantered over the desert in the direction of Latir, the site of a disused well.

After five hours of fairly comfortable travel we reached the district known as Dhafra, which is composed of flat, waterless desert relieved by occasional dunes and patches of *andab* grass. We stopped here to allow the camels to graze and pitched our tents under the shoulder of a sandhill. We estimated that we were approximately a hundred miles south-west of Baraimi, and east of the Manasir desert. Schultz and I climbed to the top of a dune to watch the sun sink below the horizon; the desert stretched out on every side as far as the eye could see, and we appeared to be in the centre of a vast, treeless plain. A desert sunset is an unforgettable sight and quite unlike anything one sees in Europe; banners of scarlet and gold are unfurled in the sky, the clouds glow with a translucent iridescence, and, as the stars appear one by one, at first pale and glimmering, then with the brightness of white fire, a purple haze covers the desert. Shadows lengthen from the dunes until they merge in the twilight gloom and then, as if a curtain had been drawn across the world, night falls suddenly in folds of cold, black silence.

The next day we continued southwards through the Liwa region to Idd, where we were fortunate to find an old well with water at ten fathoms. It lay in a bush-covered hollow of the dunes and the cameleers set to with a will to open up the shaft which had fallen in. Hamid reckoned that the well had not been used for many years and was surprised to find any water there. He gave me a taste of it from his goat's-skin, but it was horribly brackish and I was glad we had a good supply in our water-bottles.

3: Melamid S-3 (no date) 1954 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

TABLE I—SUMMARY OF CHANGES IN TRUCIAL SHEIKHDOMS

TRUCIAL SHEIKHDOM	RECENT CHANGES
ABU DHABI	The largest Trucial sheikhdom, territorially better consolidated than before. Prospecting for oil proceeds on land; oil, of a better quality than the other Arabian oils, has been discovered at Murban (about 23° 50′ N. and 53° 45′ E.), but the full significance of the discovery has not yet been evaluated. A new oil concession, to last 65 years, for the offshore subsurface rights in the Persian Gulf, as defined in the 1952 arbitration award, was granted to a combination of British (Anglo-Iranian Oil Company) and French companies in March, 1953; the area is described as exceeding 12,000 square miles (no information has been released to show how this figure was calculated); under the terms of the concession, exploration must begin within a year, and drilling within five years.
DIBAI	The town of Dibai is expanding rapidly; its population is now estimated at 38,000. Two commercial banks and a hospital have been established, and there are regular bimonthly mail-steamer connections with Iraq and India. In view of the growth of Dibai, the headquarters of the British Political Agent for Trucial 'Oman are being transferred there from Sharjah. An offshore concession described as covering 1300 square miles was granted in August, 1952, to the same group of companies that have obtained the Abu Dhabi offshore concession; the terms also are the same, except that the duration is limited to 60 years. Drilling to 12,000 feet has produced no oil so far.
SHARJAH	Probably now the second largest of the Trucial sheikhdoms; includes the inland oasis of Dhaid and the town of Kalba, on the Gulf of 'Oman. The aerodrome near the town of Sharjah is served by three flights a week from Bahrein, the only regular air service to Trucial 'Oman.
AJMAN	No change.
UMM AL QAIWAIN	" "
RAS AL KHAIMA	" "
FUJAIRA	Trucial sheikhdom since 1952; economically unimportant.

by the Sultan of Muscat and 'Oman. After some skirmishes between the troops of Saudi Arabia and British-officered Trucial 'Oman levies, a standstill agreement, similar to the Palestine armistice agreements, was reached, which stabilized for the time being the positions occupied by the various states and armies. Owing to the location of Hamasa between the other villages of the oasis, this standstill agreement has resulted in some form of blockade of the forces of Saudi Arabia there; Saudi Arabian efforts to supply Hamasa have led to further bloodshed and complaints to the United Nations. Since the oasis of Buraimi contains the only sizable wells in the eastern Rub' al Khali desert, possession of, and free access to, all or parts of it is important to anyone who desires to rule, and exploit the minerals of, the Empty Quarter of Arabia. Several suggestions for amicable settlement or arbitration of the dispute have been made, particularly by the new King of Saudi Arabia (*New York Times*, Nov. 11, 1953). In view of the importance of the oasis, definite boundaries between Saudi Arabia, Trucial 'Oman, the Sultanate of Muscat and 'Oman (in whose Dhofar region a group of American oil companies has a concession), and possibly Aden Protectorate may now be established, though the process of definition would take some time. All the oil companies operating in the states concerned have announced their agreement to any new boundaries that may be drawn.—ALEXANDER MELAMID

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

ARID ZONE RESEARCH. "Reviews of Research on Arid Zone Hydrology" (Paris, 1953) is the first fruit of UNESCO's Arid Zone Programme, which had its beginning in 1948. For study purposes the arid lands of the world were divided into eight regions—

244 and various vegetables are cultivated in the inland valleys. Cows, goats and other live-
233 stock are raised in the towns and the vil-
361 lages, but camels, goats and sheep are the mainstay of the Bedouin.

816 Ocher is mined on the offshore island of
471 Bu Musa, but no other mineral deposits of
135 commercial value are known to exist. The Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Ltd., a subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Company, holds concessions for the exploitation of the oil reserves of Trucial Oman, and is conducting exploratory operations in the area. The discovery of oil would undoubtedly have a revolutionary effect upon the economy and the standards of living of the people.

361 A large majority of the inhabitants dwell in the headquarters towns of the different sheikhdoms or in adjacent fishing or agricultural villages. Most of the towns are compact, with narrow, crooked streets, darkened by projecting balconies and matting canopies put up for protection from the sun. Dibai, the largest, is a walled town with an estimated population of over 20,000. Sharja, the second in size, is a settlement of 3,000 to 15,000 which is unwalled but surrounded by a fringe of palm thatch, or *barasti*, huts.
342 The homes of the wealthy merchants are of
361 two stories with wide balconies and spacious inner courts, but those of the poor are usually simple one- or two-room huts of mud brick or palm thatch. The Bedouin live in the traditional black goat's hair tents of the nomadic tribes. They move about with their herds, following fresh pastures in the winter and congregating around desert wells in the
361 summer. A few join the fishing or the pearl-
228 ing fleets during the summer season, while their families camp in the vicinity of the towns.

144 The nutritional habits of the people vary
571 with the racial, the social and the economic backgrounds of the diverse communities. Poverty and lack of adequate transportation facilities restrict the foodstuffs available to a large percentage of the population.
262 Dates, breads prepared from wheat or mil-

164 Over 50 per cent of the individuals treated [758] in the oil company dispensary in 1950 were suffering from conjunctivitis.

164 Skin infections are prevalent. Where 312 water is scarce the Moslem tribes sometimes 228 employ sand in the ablutions required according to religious rites. As a consequence, many acquire infections in existing abrasions of the skin. Ulcers on legs and arms are observed repeatedly. Skin diseases are reported to be particularly evident among the pearl divers.

164 Leprosy is present, but no studies have 361 been made to determine the distribution of the infection. Some tribes are said to ostracize lepers and to require them to live in segregated colonies.

Diseases Spread by Arthropods

164 Malaria is highly endemic in the towns 136 and agricultural areas, while extensive outbreaks are reported from time to time. Transmission probably is most active from April to June and from October to January, as in the oases on the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia. All forms of the disease are encountered, but outbreaks usually are attributed to *Plasmodium falciparum*. *P. vivax* predominated among the cases in which the type was determined at the oil company dispensary in 1950. Among 17 cases treated in that year, 5 were classified as due to *P. vivax;* 3, to *P. malariae;* 1, to *P. falciparum;* while 8 were not identified.

Outbreaks of sandfly fever and dengue fever are recorded occasionally, but the incidence of other arthropod-borne diseases is uncertain.

SUMMARY

162 Trucial Oman, formerly designated as the 161 "Pirate Coast," comprises 7 independent 361 sheikhdoms on the eastern coast of Arabia, near the entrance to the Persian Gulf. The population is heterogeneous, although predominantly Arab and Moslem. In 1951, it was estimated at 80,000, including about 10 per cent belonging to nomadic Bedouin tribes.

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The Principalities

I. Abu Dhabi

This principality is the largest in area and only second in importance to Shārjah. It stretches along the coast from the creek of Ghanādhah on the N. to that of 'Odeid on the W., a distance of over 200 miles. Towards the interior the boundaries are ill defined; they are said to extend on the E. to the Bireimi oasis, and on the S. to the margin of the Ruba' el-Khāli desert. The settled population is believed to be between 10,000 and 15,000, while the Bedouins (chiefly Beni Yās and Manāsīr) may number nearly 4,000. The ruling Sheikh is Hamdān ibn Zeid el-Khalīfah, who succeeded his brother Tahnūn in 1912, and is described as a firm ruler, able to maintain order. During the period of anxiety following the victories of Ibn Sa'ūd of Nejd in 1913, he endeavoured to introduce arms and ammunition on the plea that the Emir might invade his territories (see above). In the same year he negotiated a truce between the Sultan of Oman and the rebel chiefs. He appears to be a worthy descendant of his predecessor Zeid ibn Khalīfah, who in 1908 was the most powerful personality in Trucial Oman. The principality consists of the following districts from E. to W.: Abu Dhabi, Dhafrah (including Beinūnah and Līwah) Sabkhah Matti, Mijan, and 'Aqal, with the possible addition of Khatam. It further includes the islands of Arzanah, Dayyīnah, Dalmah, Dās, Qarnein Salāli, Yās, and Zirko.

i. *Abu Dhabi*, the 'home district', consists of undulating sandy desert, with scanty grazing and poor water-supply; there are, however, wells on or near the routes to the Bireimi oasis at *Bul Huweil*, *Masheirif*, and *Juhar*, and at *Silmīyah*, 20 miles SSE. of Abu Dhabi town. *Sūq Iblīs*, about 25 miles E. of the town, is a fantastically shaped outcrop of sandstone forming a landmark on the main Bireimi road. *Sameih*, 6 or 7 miles E. of Khōr el-Ghanādhah, is a hilly place with 7 wells of poor water used as a rendezvous by tribesmen of Abu Dhabi and Dibai when preparing for war. The only village of consequence is *Batīn* on the N. shore of the inlet of the same name, 1½ miles SW. of the nearest part of Abu Dhabi town; it consists of 130 date-branch huts belonging to the Āl Bu Maheir and Sūdān tribes; it has some date plantations with wells, and 50 pearl-boats.

The town of **Abu Dhabi** is situated on the coast, about 88 miles SW. of Shārjah, with a population of over 6,000. It extends for about 1½ miles along the shore, and consists chiefly of mat huts,

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361 621 438 with only a few stone buildings; the Sheikh's large rectangular fort, with towers at the corners, is a little distance inland behind the town, and on the outskirts in the same direction is a bazaar of Indian traders from Tatta in Sind. There are some indifferent wells at the back of the town, and shallow pits yield water at a place 3–4 miles distant; formerly water was brought by sea from Dibai. The bazaar has about 70 shops, more than half of which are kept by Persians, and a third by Hindus. The people live almost entirely by pearl-diving and fishing, there being little cultivation, but they own more than 700 camels. About half are of the Beni Yās tribe, the remainder of various other tribes, chiefly Āl Bu Maheir, Sūdān, and Marar. The Persians number 500, the Hindus less than a hundred.

At high tide Abu Dhabi becomes an island, through the connexion of creeks and backwaters. About 10 miles inland there is a ford on the creek called *Khōr el-Maqta'*, connecting the interior of Khōr el-Batīn with the sea at a point 2 or 3 miles beyond the town. Here a fort on a sandbank in the middle of the creek commands the passage to the mainland, which can only be made on foot at low tide.

634 133 361 ii. *Dhafrah*, between the Persian Gulf on the N. and the Great Desert on the S., is bounded on the W. by Sabkhat Matti and the Jāfūrah desert, and on the E. by Khatam. It is a vast region, containing at least five known tracts, *Līwah*, *Beinūnah*, *Qufa*, *Taff*, and *Dhafrah Proper*. Līwah, the most important, lies farthest inland; it is a narrow belt 175 miles long, running E. and W., and consisting of undulating white sand-dunes, with a series of more than 20 depressions, each of which contains fertile soil and supports the cultivation of a neighbouring village; water is obtained at about 12 ft. Beinūnah is a tract of heavy red sand or soil, with scrub and grazing, lying NW. of Līwah, and between it and the Gulf. Qufa, N. of Līwah, is a barren region of sandy ridges, with a few shallow wells; Taff, a maritime strip extending the whole length of Dhafrah. The tract of Dhafrah Proper is E. of Beinūnah, and resembles it in character. The inhabitants of the whole of Dhafrah belong to the Beni Yās and Manāsīr tribes. The remaining tracts are of less importance. iii. *Sabkhah Matti* is a coastal district W. of Beinūnah, extending for a distance of about 30 miles and consisting of a saline or nitrous marsh without wells or vegetation. iv. *Mijan*, W. of the preceding, is a district of stony mounds and firm pebbly tracts, with some grazing in winter, and a good many wells. v. *'Aqal*, between Mijan and the base of the peninsula of El-Qatar, is a tract of heavy dark sand. vi. *Khatam* lies NE. of Dhafrah Proper,

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and is said to be a meeting-ground of the Beni Yās, Manāsīr, and Na'īm tribes.

Of the islands, only *Dalmah* and *Yās* need be described. The former lies more than 40 miles E. by S. of the mouth of the *Khōr el-'Odeid*, and about half that distance from the nearest point of the coast to the SE. It is 5 miles by 2½ miles, and for the most part hilly, with wells of brackish water and deposits of red oxide of iron. There is a small settlement of Beni Yās; but the chief importance of the island is that at the end of the pearling season a temporary bazaar is set up, and persons engaged in the trade, including the Indian merchants of the Trucial Coast, go there to collect debts and purchase pearls. Yās is about 20 miles SE. of Dalmah, and only a few miles from the shore at Jebel Dhannah. It is 6½ miles by 5 miles, with low shores, but central volcanic hills; at the S. end is a landlocked natural harbour known to British sailors as Meriton Bay, with a depth of 4–6 fathoms. Water is only obtainable after rain. The island is visited in winter by Beni Yās fishermen.

II. Dibai

This small principality lies on the Gulf Coast S. of Shārjah, between Abu Heil on the N. and the creek Khōr Ghanādhah on the S.; its extent towards the interior is not precisely known. It consists of low sandy country without important natural features, the only hill being Jebel el-'Āli, 19 miles SW. of Dibai town, which, though only 225 ft. high, is a landmark visible for 17 miles. The town contains almost the whole settled population, the only other places with permanent inhabitants being the small coast village of *Jumeirah*, 3 miles to the SW., and the larger isolated village of *Hajarein*, 50 miles away to the SE. in the Wādi Hatta, an isolated dependency, geographically belonging to the Sultanate of Oman.

The ruler of Dibai is Sheikh Sa'īd ibn Makhtūm, who succeeded his cousin Būti ibn Suheil in 1912, and is at feud with the latter's family. He is a wealthy chief, owing to the commercial importance of his capital, but his relations with the Indian Government have not been uniformly good; in August 1913 he had to be warned because a boat of H.M.S. *Sphinx* was fired on from the town. There had been trouble under previous rulers, chiefly owing to the use of Dibai by smugglers of arms (see above, p. 336).

The town of **Dibai**, with a population perhaps not far from 20,000, lies 7 miles SW. of Shārjah and 79 miles NE. of Abu Dhabi, on both sides of a creek with a shallow entrance extending some miles to the SE.; it was once walled, but with the exception of towers on

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361 438 162 the landward side, the defences are ruinous. There is good water in wells from 5 to 30 ft. deep. The town has three main quarters: (1) *Deirah*, on a tongue of land on the NE. side of the creek, between it and the sea, with a date-grove at the back, contains the main bazaar of 350 shops and about 1,600 houses, inhabited by Arabs, Persians, Baluchis, and others; (2) *Shandaghah*, on the SW. side of the creek, contains a residence of the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, with about 250 houses all occupied by Arabs, domicile being forbidden to others; (3) *Dibai* proper, on the same side but farther from the sea, with about 200 houses, 50 shops, and the principal mosque, is the quarter in which British-Indian subjects are collected.

The chief elements of the population are: Beni Yās (440 houses), Āl Bu Maheir (400 houses), mixed Arabs, including natives of Hasa, Bahrein, and Koweit (400 houses), Persians (250 houses), Sūdān (250 houses), and Baluchis (200 houses). The people own about 4,000 date-trees; other cultivation is confined to a little lucerne; live stock includes nearly 2,000 camels, 400 donkeys, 400 head of cattle, and about 1,000 goats. There are about 335 pearl-boats, and 20 sea-going vessels.

504 The importance of Dibai lies in its increasing use as a port of call for steamers, which lie outside the creek; the place has largely supplanted Lingeh in Persia as the chief distributing centre of foreign goods to the interior, especially to the Bireimi oasis. Before the war, steamers of the British India and Bombay and Persia Steam Navigation Companies called at the port, the first at regular fortnightly intervals.

III. Shārjah

635 This is the most important of the principalities, having coasts on both gulfs, and covering a considerable portion of the Oman promontory. With the exception of the Sheikhdoms of 'Ajmān and Umm el-Qaiwein on the W. coast, and a part of the interior which is to all intents and purposes independent, it practically includes everything between a line from Sha'am to Dibah on the N., and Shārjah town and Khōr Kalba on the S. The principality is nominally all under the Sheikh Khālid ibn Ahmed, who succeeded Sajar ibn Khālid in 1914. But, as in Bahrein, his resources are curtailed by the cession of important territory as fiefs or appanages. The Sheikh rules Shārjah town and district, and the Oasis of Dheid is administered by a Vali in his name. But Ras el-Kheimah, under the late reign, had almost attained a recognized independence; and the important Shemeilīyah district on the Gulf of Oman, nominally a fief held by a member of the ruling family residing in 'Aimān, has

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broken from control under the influence of the sheikh of Fujeirah. 635
The town of Dibah, the appanage of another relative, who enjoys the title of Vali, in like manner adds nothing to the exchequer of the Sheikh.

The principality, in its undiminished state, consisted of four 634
districts, Ras el-Kheimah in the N., Shameilīyah on the E., Dheid in the interior, and Shārjah proper on the W. The island of Sirri is claimed by Persia, and is no longer effectively occupied by the Sheikh of Shārjah. The districts are described in the following sections :

i. *Ras el-Kheimah* is divided from the Ru'ūs el-Jibāl district of 634
the Oman Sultanate on the NE. by a line running obliquely from 133
Ras esh-Sha'am on the W. coast of the promontory to a point 361
between the villages of Dibah and Bei'ah on the E. coast ; on the W. its boundary is the sea ; the S. boundary follows a line drawn from Jezīrat el-Hamra to the S. extremity of the Jiri plain, from which point a line to Dibah forms the limit on the SE. The district consists of low sandy desert near the sea, rising to the hill country of the Oman promontory. Its chief subdivisions are the plain of *Sīr*, a cultivated strip on the coast, extending from about 3 miles S. of Rams to about 7 miles S. of Ras el-Kheimah town, with a length of about 12 miles and an extreme breadth of about 5 miles in the S. ; and *Jiri*, immediately S. of Sīr, a cultivated plain of dark soil between the Oman hills on the E. and sandy desert on the W. The upper part of the Wādi Hām, dividing the district from Shameilīyah, belongs to Ras el-Kheimah. Several islands are also connected with the district. *Jezīrat el-Hamra* (also called *Jezīrat ez-Za'āb*), which is low and sandy, lies 12 miles WSW. of Ras el-Kheimah town ; it runs for 2 miles parallel to the coast, with which it is nearly joined at low water. *Bu Mūsa*, in the Gulf, about half-way between Shārjah town and Lingeh on the Persian coast, has a maximum length of about 3 miles ; it also is low and sandy, with occasional isolated hills, possessing about 20 wells and a small date plantation. There is a permanent population of about 20 households from *Khān* in Shārjah, owning pearl-boats and live stock, and a shifting population composed of fishermen from the mainland of Oman and Persians who work deposits of red oxide of iron for a Lingah contractor. *Sīr Bu Na'air* lies about 70 miles from the coast, a little S. of W. ; it is 2½ miles by 2 miles, uninhabited, with hills of volcanic rock, a low sandy point in the SE., and neighbouring pearl-banks ; it possesses brackish wells and salt deposits in the hills. *Tunb*, about 32 miles NE. of Bu Mūsa, with a few permanent inhabitants and a well on the S. side, is about 2¼ miles in diameter, and rises

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634 133 361 to 165 ft. at its highest point; except for a little grazing it is barren. *Nābiyu Tunb*, 8 miles to the W. of Tunb, with an area of 1 mile by ¼ mile, is uninhabited and without water.

[632] 361 621 438 The town of **Ras el-Kheimah**, consisting of about 1,000 houses and forming the administrative centre of the district, is on the Gulf Coast, about 48 miles N. of Shārjah town. Sheikh Sālim ibn Sultān claims to be independent of Shārjah, but his independence has not yet been recognized. The town stands upon a narrow spit of land 2½ miles long, running parallel to the coast and connected with the mainland at the SW. end; the creek between the spit and the shore, though its entrance at low tide is only 2 ft. deep, has a general depth of 9 ft., and forms a good anchorage for native boats; large vessels must anchor 2½ miles to 3 miles NW. of the town.

About half of the houses are of stone and gypsum mortar, the remainder of date-branches. There is an old fort of no military value, and a ruinous wall crosses the isthmus SW. of the town. The inhabitants are a mixed race known as Ahl Ras el-Kheimah, occupying 400 houses, Mahārah (250 houses), Āl 'Ali (150 houses), and Āl Bu Maheir (120 houses), with a few Na'īm, Baluchis, and Khōjahs. Drinking-water is scanty and of poor quality. The town possesses about 16,000 date-palms, while the large groves belonging to *Sīr* begin on the mainland opposite the town. The people own 33 pearl-boats and 15 other sea-going vessels, with about 120 fishing-boats; ive stock includes some 800 goats, 150 cattle, 175 donkeys, 130 camels, and 20 horses. Trade resembles that of other ports on the Trucial Coast; the chief manufacture is of daggers. At Mahārah, the site of an old village on the E. side of the creek, there is usually a temporary colony, sometimes of Persians from Rams. The chief villages, of 100 houses and above, are as follows:——

In Ras el-Kheimah district:

1. *Rams*: 400 houses, mostly of mud and stone, on the coast about 8 miles NE. of Ras el-Kheimah town, on the S. side of a small creek with shallow entrance. The inhabitants are Taneij, chiefly pearl-divers and fishermen, but owning date plantations partly situated at *Dhāyah*, a place now uninhabited, 2 miles inland. Live-stock includes 500 goats, 50 donkeys, 20 camels, 20 head of cattle.

2. *Sha'am*: about 300 houses, mostly of mud, on the coast 17 miles NNE. of Ras el-Kheimah town and 2 miles S. of Ras Sha'am. Inhabitants are all Shihūh, occupied with pearl-diving, fishing, and cultivation, and owning a few pearl-boats and coasting vessels, with 7,000 date-palms. Live stock: 50 donkeys, 30 camels, 20 head of cattle. About 1 mile S. is a small tower upon a hillock used for defence.

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3. *Dibah*, on the coast of the Gulf of Oman, 1 mile S. of Bei'ah; the most southerly village of the Sultanate; nearly 200 houses, half of which are occupied by the peasant class known as Bayādīr, the rest by 'Awānāt, Naqbiyīn, and Sharqiyīn; good wells with water at 25 ft.; 10,000 date-palms. Live stock: sheep, goats, donkeys, and camels. Dibah is held as a fief by a relative of the Sheikh, who also governs the small village of *Wamm*, a few miles to the W.

In the tract of Sīr :—

4. *Shimil*, 5 miles inland; 200 houses of Beni Shameili; 4,000 date-palms. Live stock: sheep, camels, and a few head of cattle.

In the tract of Jiri :—

5. *Khatt*, under the hills on the E. side of the plain about 12 miles SSE. of Ras el-Kheimah town; 100 houses. Oasis of 20,000 date-palms, and a hot spring used for irrigation. Live stock of sheep, donkeys, camels, and cattle.

In Jezīrat el-Hamra island :—

6. Village of the same name: 500 houses of the Za'āb tribe, divided into two quarters, *Umm 'Aweimir* and *Manākh*; 25 pearl-boats. Live stock: 500 sheep, 100 camels, 100 donkeys, and 150 cattle.

ii. *Shameilīyah*, on the coast of the Gulf of Oman, extending for more than 30 miles from Gharfah on the N., to Khōr Kalba on the S., and inland to the Wādi Hām, the boundary towards Shārjah district, the lower part of which it includes. The hills in the N. approach the coast, but recede from it in the S.

The principal villages, all on the coast, are the following, in order from N. to S. :—

1. *Bidyah*; 300 houses of Sharqiyīn fishermen, and cultivators of dates, wheat, and maize; 10 sea-going boats running to Sīb and Muscat; 3,500 date-trees. Live stock: 200 head of cattle, 100 sheep and goats, donkeys and camels.

2. *Khōr Fakkān*, fief of a relative of the Sheikh; about 5 miles S. of Bidyah on the S. shore of a bay with sheltered boat harbour at its E. end; 150 houses of Naqbiyīn and Persians, living by cultivation of wheat and dates and by pearl-diving; good water; 5,000 date-palms; a few shops; 4 or 5 coasting vessels running to Muscat.

3. *Fujeirah*, 15 miles S. of Khōr Fakkān, but about 2 miles from the sea; its landing-place is called Ghareifah. Fujeirah is surrounded by a 9-ft. wall, with an outer ditch and breastwork on the S. and W. sides. It has 150 houses, chiefly of mud and stone, occupied by Sharqiyīn pearl-divers and cultivators. It is the stronghold of the Sharqi leader, Nāsir ibn Shāhin et-Tawār, who claims independent rule over the village and a considerable neighbouring tract.

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4. *Ghāllah* (or *Kalba*), 4 miles S. of Fujeirah ; about 300 houses, chiefly of date-branch, and a few mud go-downs ; a small fort held by a representative of Shārjah. Inhabitants chiefly Naqbiyīn and Sharqiyīn, fishermen and cultivators. About 25,000 date-palms, and tobacco plantations in the hills ; wheat also grown. About 10 sea-going boats run to Muscat, Mekrān, and the Persian Coast.

5. *Khōr Kalba*, 4 to 5 miles S. of Ghāllah, situated on a creek, and defended by a fort ; 150 houses of the Za'āb tribe, who own a few sea-going boats. Not to be confounded with Ghāllah, which is also called Kalba.

iii. *Dheid*, a plain measuring about 15 miles in each direction, situated in the interior about 30 miles due E. of Shārjah town ; it is bounded on the E. by the hills forming the backbone of the Oman promontory, on the W. and N. by sand-dunes, and on the S. by the shingly plateau of Qallah Mahāfidh. Dheid is fairly well wooded, containing numerous acacia trees, and after rain produces abundance of coarse grass. It is also sufficiently watered ; a stream (*felej*) flowing from *Wādi Haqālah* in the hills to the SE. irrigates the cultivation round Dheid village. There are also wells at *Muraqqibāt*, 3–4 miles N. of the village, on the route across the promontory from Umm el-Qaiwein to Fujeirah, in the Fareikh valley, a few miles NW. of Muraqqibāt, at *Tū'i 'Ali*, 6 miles SSW. from the village under the sand-dunes bordering the plain, and at *Wushāh*, 3½ miles S. by E. of the village in the Wādi Katheirah on the route to the Bireimi oasis. In the summer months a continuous hot wind blows ; at other times the climate is not oppressive.

There is only one village of any size in the district :—

Dheid, consisting of about 140 date-leaf huts inhabited by Taneij, Beni Qitab, and Na'īm ; in the quarters occupied by the first and last there are fortified mud towers. On the E. side of the village is a large fort of the Sheikh of Shārjah, with a tower at each angle, and held by the governor of the district. Through the precincts of the fort runs the above-mentioned stream, the water being systematically distributed to the cultivators of the neighbouring date-groves ; before being tapped for irrigation it is about 3 ft. wide and 2 ft. deep, clear, and with a strong flow. A little wheat is grown, and there is the usual complement of domestic animals. 'There is reason to think that in the event of British or Indian troops being required in Trucial Oman, Dheid would be the most suitable station for them in the interior, at least during the cold weather. The water-supply is excellent and ample ; camel and other grazing is abundant ; and the place is probably already accessible for wheeled transport

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from Ras el-Kheimah town by way of the Sīr and Jiri plains, besides which there are camel routes through the hills connecting it with the ports of the Shameilīyah district on the other side of the Oman promontory.' (*Persian Gulf Gazetteer.*)

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iv. *Shārjah*, a narrow strip of sandy desert on the W. coast between 'Ajmān and Dibai; the Sheikh of Shārjah also claims the allegiance of *Hamrīyah* on the other side of 'Ajmān. The chief centres of a population amounting in the aggregate to about 20,000 are three coastal villages and the town of Shārjah.

The town of **Shārjah,** the capital, and residence of the Sheikh, is the most important town on the Trucial Coast. It is situated between 'Ajmān and Dibai, and extends for more than a mile along the E. shore of a small creek parallel to the sea, a detached quarter, *Layyah*, standing on the opposite shore; at low tide the entrance to the creek, on the NE., has only about 2 ft. of water. At the S. end of the town is a bluff rising 30–40 ft.; inland the country is sand with scattered date-groves. There are numerous masonry buildings, including 21 mosques, but most of the houses are of date-branches, and the streets are really narrow and crooked lanes. The population of about 15,000 is composed of Shweihiyīn (400 houses), *Hūwalah* and Sūdān (300 houses each), Āl 'Ali, Āl Bu Maheir, 'Abādilah and Matārīsh (200 houses each), Na'īm (100 houses), and mixed tribes (700 houses); nearly all the Arabs are Wahabis, calling themselves Hanbali Sunnis. About 200 British-Indians reside in the town, whose interests are protected by a native agent from the British Residency at Bushire. The bazaar has 200 shops, and there is an equal number of warehouses for wheat, rice, and dates. The chief manufacture is of fine woollen abbas. A few sea-going boats are also built yearly, and about 20 vessels run to Basra, the Persian Coast, Bombay, and occasionally to Yemen; there are also nearly 200 pearl-boats, with an equal number of fishing-boats. Date plantations contain some 4 000 trees, and live stock includes about 500 camels, 550 donkeys, 2,200 sheep and goats, and some cattle.

The villages are:—

1. *Hamrīyah*, 12 miles NE. of Shārjah town and 6 miles NE. of 'Ajmān; about 300 houses. It is situated on the N. side of a creek defended by a fort on the shore, and by several towers. The inhabitants are chiefly Na'īm, owning about 20 pearl-boats and 1,000 date palms, with live stock including camels, donkeys, cattle, and sheep. The local Sheikh, 'Abd er-Rāhim, nominally under Shārjah, is practically independent, and may ultimately be recognized as a Trucial chief.

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361 621 438 2. *Heir*, between Shārjah town and 'Ajmān, defended by 7 or 8 towers; 250 houses of Na'īm, owning 25 pearl-boats, 2,500 date-palms, and live stock of camels, donkeys, cattle, sheep, and goats; wells 3–5 fathoms deep.

3. *Khān*, on the N. side of an inlet about 2 miles SW. of Shārjah town. About 200 houses, chiefly of stone set in gypsum mortar or mud; inhabitants, Āl Bu Maheir, Mazārī', and Manāsīr, owning 74 pearl-boats and 40 fishing-boats, with camels, donkeys, cattle, and goats.

IV. 'Ajmān

635 361 621 438 A small principality consisting of the town of the same name and its environs, situated 6 miles SW. of Hamrīyah, and 5 miles NE. of Shārjah, in the territory of which it forms an enclave. It lies on the S. side of the entrance of a creek with 5 feet of water on the bar at low tide. The population is less than 1,000, chiefly Āl Bu Maheir and Na'īm, all pearl-divers and fishermen, owning about 40 pearl-boats and 25 fishing-boats. Fresh water is obtained from wells 9 ft. deep, of which the locality is constantly changing. There are date plantations with about 2,000 trees, but no other cultivation. Live stock includes camels, donkeys, cattle, goats, and a few horses.

The Sheikh, Hāmid ibn 'Abd el-'Azīz, who succeeded his murdered father in 1910, is of a rough and quarrelsome character; he has given trouble by connivance at the illicit traffic in arms. Friendly relations usually subsist between the Sheikh and the inhabitants of Bireimi.

V. Umm el-Qaiwein

Another small principality composed of a town with the adjoining country, and also forming an enclave in Shārjah. It extends northwards to Jezīrat el-Hamra and southwards part of the way to Hamrīyah. The town lies about 12 miles NE. of 'Ajmān and 18 miles NE. of Shārjah, on the E. end of a peninsula, forming, with a neighbouring island, a landlocked creek with very shallow entrance; it is defended by a wall across the isthmus, and by detached block-houses. There are about 1,000 houses, 250 of which are of stone, the rest of date-branches; they include 20 shops. The inhabitants, numbering some 5,000, belong chiefly to the Āl 'Ali tribe, and are mostly pearl-divers and fishermen, owning about 70 pearl-boats and 60 fishing-boats, with a sea-going vessel running to Bombay; about 20 boats are built yearly in the town. Live stock includes 720 camels, with donkeys, horses, sheep, and goats. The water is good, obtained from

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wells 6 ft. deep; date plantations comprise about 1,500 trees. The only point of importance not on the coast is *Felej Āl 'Ali*, about 16 miles SE. of the town, with about 5,000 date-palms belonging to the Sheikh, irrigated by a stream; this is a place of assemblage for Bedouins in the Umm el-Qaiwein service when called to arms.

The Sheikh, Rashīd ibn Ahmed, is at feud with his expelled half-brother Nāsir, who disputes his title. In 1914, on his persistent refusal to settle certain claims of Nāsir, Rashīd was coerced by H.M.SS. *Fox*, *Dartmouth*, and *Odin*, and forced to pay Rs. 10,000, with a fine of Rs. 15,000.

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2: Codrai G-3 (1948-1950)1950 MK1 Oman
Trucial Oman MK4

The market-place at Dibai (a small British export area for less refined goods), where mingle both coastal and bedouin Arabs, Persians, Indians and Negroes.

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TO 133 502 721

in two miles from their entrances. Thus it was that the pirate tribes were able to build their towns behind these natural booms, and to carry on their ruthless calling in defiance of the British and Portuguese navies — and to earn for their stronghold the much feared and romantic name, "The Pirate Coast".

TO 101 631 648 628 [527]

Trucial 'Oman, as it is called today, is ruled by six independent sheikhs, bound under old treaties with Britain to maintain a maritime truce for the prevention of piracy and slave-trading. Family feuds and inter-tribal quarrelling are as common among them as are the rusty, ancient cannon. Many of the latter are no doubt from British men-o'-war, and some are still used for ceremonial occasions, a party afterwards being despatched to retrieve the cannon-balls.

TO 361 504 439

Unspoiled by time, Sharjah is one of the principal little towns, but it lacks the enchantment of Dibai, a picturesque centre a few miles along the coast to the west. A wide, shallow inlet divides Dibái and its waterfront of quaint little coffee-houses, and provides anchorage for dhows that bring transshipped goods from other continents. In the large market-place, spread on either side of the inlet and connected by a ferry-service of numerous little pole-propelled craft, the bedouin, with his henna-dyed beard and ancient rifle, can be seen fingering everything that is on show, from modern radio sets to ladies' lingerie, but he has little use for some of the strange products of the West.

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ladies' lingerie, but he has little use for some of the strange products of the West. For the townsman, who is living in a mixed community of Arabs from many parts of the Persian Gulf, Persians and Indians; it is a different proposition, and his materialism has made Dibai a small British export area, though mostly for the less refined goods that are unable to find buyers on a more discriminating market.

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The primitive bedouins who live by the foothills of the main mountain range, who owe allegiance to no one, are a constant cause of worry to the sheikhs, from whom they extract levies in return for protection; if the money is not forthcoming they raid the villages and carry off goods, camels and children. On the whole, however, the people of the coast seem to have a peaceful enough existence, making their living by, among other things, pearling, fishing and boat-building.

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At several points along the coast the wells are some distance inland, and water has to be transported to the villages by camel or donkey. Though brackish and unpalatable, it is expensive; the cost of buying water is a burden on the poor, and they take only sufficient for their minimum needs. Even so, the water-pot is always at hand when a traveller passes by — a simple hospitality that is often very touching. The lot of the dogs, a wretched one at the best of times in the

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